Osteoporosis

What is osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is a disease that causes very weak bones that break easily. Women are five times more likely to get osteoporosis than men. There is no way to stop or cure it, but there are things you can do to it slow down.

What causes osteoporosis?

- It can run in families
- Not enough calcium and vitamin D in the diet
- Not getting enough exercise
- Women who've gone through menopause are more likely to have it.

Who is at risk for osteoporosis?

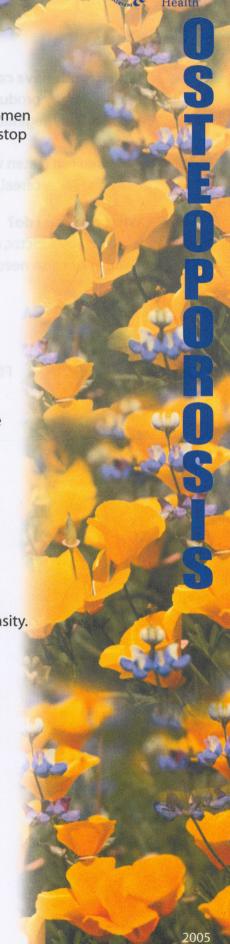Anyone can get osteoporosis, but some people have a higher chance than others:

- Women
- People with a thin, small frame
- Others in your family have had a lot of broken bones or a stooped posture
- Women who went through menopause before age 45.
- Have or had an eating disorder.
- People over age 50.
- People who have used certain medicines for a long time, like:
  - Some hormones.
  - Medicines for seizure.
  - Some medicines for asthma, arthritis, or cancer.

How do I know if I have osteoporosis?

- There are tests that use either x-rays or sound waves to measure bone density.
- Ask your doctor about which test you might need.

How can I lower my chances of getting osteoporosis?

- Get enough calcium. Women under 50 years old need at least 1,000 mg of calcium each day. Women over 50 need at least 1,200 mg of calcium.
- Get enough vitamin D. Women under 50 years old need at least 200 IU of vitamin D. Women over 50 need at least 400 IU of vitamin D.
- Get exercise everyday, like walking or biking.
- Don't smoke.
- If you drink alcohol, don't drink more than one glass per day.

Which foods have calcium?
- Low-fat dairy products like milk, cheese, and yogurt
- Green, leafy vegetables like kale and turnip greens
- Tofu
- Canned fish (eaten with bones)
- Orange juice, cereal, and other foods that have calcium added

What else can I do?
- Talk to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about medicines you can take to build bones.
- You might also need calcium or vitamin D pills.

To Learn More...

FDA/Office of Women's Health www.fda.gov/womens